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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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2 March 1966

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USSR: One Soviet Venus probe has impacted on the planet, apparently without collecting data, and the other has passed close by.

According to a Soviet announcement, Venus 3 crashed on the planet's surface yesterday. The Soviets admitted that they were unable to establish communications with the probe during the last portion of its flight, and it is doubtful that it collected any data on the planet's atmosphere.

Moscow also stated that Venus 2 flew by the planet on 27 February at a distance of only about 15,000 statute miles. The probe was probably equipped to make physical measurements of the planet such as atmospheric composition and radiation levels. However, it is not clear whether communications are being maintained. The Soviet announcement was silent on this question, and it is possible that Venus 2 also suffered a communications failure.

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Bolivia: [The return of former junta co-president Barrientos to Bolivia--scheduled for 4 March--will probably lead to intense political activity looking toward the national elections in early July.]

[Since Barrientos' abrupt resignation on 4 January and subsequent journey abroad, political activity has been practically at a standstill. The political parties, with the exception of Barrientos' new Bolivian Revolutionary Front (FRB), have done little to prepare for elections. The only presidential nominee to date is Barrientos, and even he has not publicly acknowledged his candidacy.]

[One party, the rightist Bolivian Socialist Falange, has decided to abstain from the elections. Most of the others plan to hold conventions this month or next to decide on participation or abstention. In the meantime, political leaders are trying to form alliances and to patch up differences in their badly factionalized organizations.]

[The unity of the armed forces continues to be the key to stability in Bolivia. Although Barrientos' resignation from the junta lessened dissension among the military, the relative unity that now exists will come under severe strain in the coming months.]

[Already Barrientos' insistence on retaining his position as commander in chief of the armed forces has caused some concern among high-ranking officers. His flirtation with the discredited Nationalist Revolutionary Movement to win electoral support has stirred some resentment, and a few military men reportedly are working to prevent his candidacy, cancel elections, and destroy the FRB.]

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NOTES

Ghana: The evacuation of Soviet aid personnel [evidently] began yesterday as stipulated by the new anti-Communist regime. An Accra airport official indicated almost 200 Soviet nationals were expected to depart aboard the two Ghana Airways' IL-18s the first day. The Ghanaian Foreign Ministry has also been instructed to close the East German trade mission,

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Philippines-Malaysia: The recognition of Malaysia by the Philippines, which had been planned to take place yesterday, has been put off because of intense Indonesian opposition, [including a threat to sever relations with] [Manila] President Marcos is sending a special envoy to Kuala Lumpur to explain the decision. Marcos appears committed to recognition, however, and Indonesia's pressure is expected merely to delay the action.

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Syria: At least one member of the Communist Party of Syria is included in the 19-man cabinet which was announced yesterday in Damascus. This is the first cabinet in three years of Baathist rule to contain a Communist, although the regime ousted last week had named several party members or sympathizers to the Syrian legislative body last August. Army commanders reportedly remain divided in their support of the new regime, and an opposition movement could develop at any time.

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USSR: The two Soviet Venus probes launched in November 1965--Venus 2 and Venus 3--should pass close to the planet within the next several days. According to unofficial Soviet statements, the probes carry different payloads, and are equipped to measure temperature, cloud cover, radiation, atmospheric composition, and other physical features of Venus as well as conditions on the way. Another possible experiment may be to photograph Venus and transmit the pictures back to earth. Periodic Soviet press announcements have suggested that both probes are still operating.

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